



## DEFENDING DEMOCRACY - A CALL TO ACTION

**Whereas** The January 6<sup>th</sup> storming of the United States Capitol Building showed a mass of extremists ready to use violence and provocation to seize power.

**Whereas** Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached against the conjoined evils of violence, racism, militarism, and fascism on display in the insurrection and warned of the dire consequences should those evils fully take over American political life.<sup>1</sup>

**Whereas** The events at the Capitol are part of a nation-wide pattern of rapidly increasing right-wing violence against BIPOC communities, women, and governing institutions in recent years.<sup>2</sup>

**Whereas** Right now, further actions, including specific threats of violence, are being pursued to subvert our democracy across the country and in Washington State.<sup>3</sup>

**Whereas** Elected leaders, including the President Trump, members of Congress and Washington State Representatives, are encouraging these actions to advance a radical right-wing agenda.

**Whereas** Such attacks have historically been used as a means to suppress the interests of working people and destroy unions.

**Whereas** Financial, organizational and ideological support for these actions comes from a loose network of corporate and billionaire interests that also support on-going attacks on our unions and working people through mouthpieces like the Freedom Foundation and Mackinac Center.<sup>4</sup>

**Whereas** The current moment with its confluence of deep polarization, sky-rocketing economic inequality<sup>5</sup>, and overt racism, particularly as these trends have been heightened by the pandemic, is a time of real threat to our democracy.<sup>6</sup>

**Whereas** In the past, such moments have also created great opportunities for organized labor and allied movements to advance the interests of working people.<sup>7</sup>

**Whereas** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. demanded that we not sit idly by, content in our beliefs, but instead move to action.<sup>8</sup>

**Whereas** The Martin Luther King County Labor Council adopted a Resolution on Protecting Democracy in October 2020. The threats to our democracy continue now post-election as urgently as they were prior to the election. There is still ongoing work to do and mobilization efforts needed more than ever.

**Therefore it is Resolved** That Martin Luther King County Labor Council fulfill the commitments brought forward in the Resolution on Protecting Democracy adopted in October 2020 to work

with allies in the anti-racist, environmental justice, feminist, and poor peoples movements as well as the LGBTQ+, religious minorities, and immigrant communities to make mobilization plans, in response to the demonstrated and increasing threat to democratic rights;

**Be it further Resolved** That MLK Labor in collaboration with other labor and progressive forces, will strategize, organize and engage in nonviolent collective actions to protect our democracy, the Constitution, the law, and our nation's democratic traditions. MLK Labor will call upon the Washington State Labor Council and the AFL-CIO to coordinate the development of strategy and shared messaging by organized labor and community allies and will coordinate mobilization, peacekeeper and other necessary training in preparation for extensive non-violent actions;

**Be it finally resolved** That MLK Labor will call on City and County governments to pledge to protect the protesters defending democracy and commit to not using police action or curfews to curtail these activities and to use all available resources to stand up against any efforts by those that are disruptive to non-violent collective action in defending our democracy.

**Conclusion** We are at a moment in history which calls for widespread mobilization that our labor movement can bring. We must do this while centering racial justice and working collaboratively with community partners. We must build unity not only to protect our democracy, but to improve democracy, and to create a better future for all people and our beloved communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Cornel West, Martin Luther King Jr was a radical. We must not sterilize his legacy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/04/martin-luther-king-cornel-west-legacy>

<sup>2</sup> Seth G. Jones, Catrina Doxsee and Nicholas Harrington. The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states>; Seth G. Jones, Catrina Doxsee and Nicholas Harrington. The War Comes Home: The Evolution of Domestic Terrorism in the United States.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/war-comes-home-evolution-domestic-terrorism-united-states>.

<sup>3</sup> Hal Berton. Washington State Patrol investigates 'very specific threats' to Capitol, other buildings.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/washington-state-patrol-investigates-threats-to-capitol-other-government-buildings-as-inauguration-nears/>; Washington and state capitols brace for violence from armed Trump supporters.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/15/washington-us-state-capitols-threat-violence-trump>; Mike Carter. Far-right group stakes claim at Whidbey Island Grange, stoking angry debate and exposing political divides.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/far-right-group-stakes-claim-at-whidbey-island-grange-stoking-angry-debate-and-exposing-political-divides/>. Seth G. Jones, Catrina Doxsee and Nicholas Harrington. The War Comes Home: The Evolution of Domestic Terrorism in the United States. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/war-comes-home-evolution-domestic-terrorism-united-states>.

<sup>4</sup> Source Watch. MacKinac Center for Public Policy.

[https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Mackinac\\_Center\\_for\\_Public\\_Policy](https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Mackinac_Center_for_Public_Policy); Source Watch. Freedom Foundation.

[https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Freedom\\_Foundation](https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Freedom_Foundation)

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Zucman. Global Wealth Inequality. NBER Working Paper Series.

[https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w25462/w25462.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25462/w25462.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Suzanne Mettle and Robert C. Lieberman. Four Threats: The Recurring Crisis of American Democracy. (2020).

<sup>7</sup> [http://depts.washington.edu/depress/strikes\\_unions.shtml](http://depts.washington.edu/depress/strikes_unions.shtml).

<sup>8</sup> Martin Luther King Jr. Letter from the Birmingham Jail.

[https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\\_Gen/Letter\\_Birmingham.html](https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)